DOWN TO EARTH

Admission Rush in Dhaka University

By AS M Nurunnabi

With every passing year, the already acute problem of admission to the Dhaka Uni versity is getting worse. It was reported that in the academic vear 1993-94, the total number of seats available in the first year Honours course was 3737 against which 52,098 application forms were bought by intending candidates. True, many of such application forms may not have been submitted at all, but it is easy to guess from the huge number of application forms bought by intending candidates that the degree of competition for admission to the available seats would be extremely tough and that a very large number of candidates would be refused admission and they would have to look elsewhere for their chances. This stifling situation has become a natural yearly phenomenon. If we place this picture side by side with another dismal picture of prospective educated unemployed, the total scenario takes on harrowing aspects.

Some suggest easy solution to the problem such as expanding the capacity of different faculty departments. Such a course may not be easy to adopt for several reasons, the more difficult among which is that it involves the question of expansion of the whole infrastructure of connected facilities including also the question of considerable outlay. .

The question of expansion of existing facilities involves another crucial aspect. The point is how far it is feasible to put any additional burden or pressure on the existing facilities, which are already under

severe strain. In this perspecassurance of completing different courses in due time. However popular and pressing the demand for expansion of different departments of the university may be, there is no denying that the existing standard of education at the university is far from satisfactory and it will go down further if any expansion is projected without adequate supporting

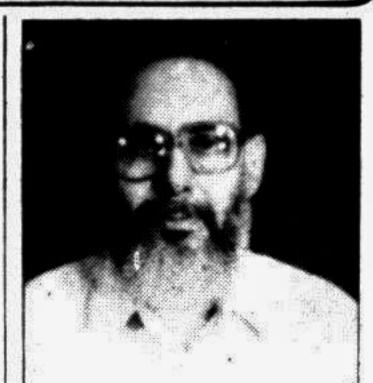
advocate the introduction of a second shift of classes in the university. This suggestion loses much of its validity because of the multitude of problems already facing the university, as pointed out. Add to this the issue of finding additional residential accommodation. Even if we feel limited need for recruitment of additional teachers for the second shift, the offer of extra emoluments may tempt some existing teachers to undertake extra duties but there is scope for apprehension that the standard of education may suffer drastically when teachers are called upon to put in extra long hours of labour.

There are many reasons why the Dhaka University attracts increasing number of students: It is the capital, a megacity with a cosmopolitan image. The problem is how we can reduce the current allurement with the students for

the Dhaka University. There are of course some other universities in the country but they seem to attract the students less. When a student goes to any such university, it is perhaps under compulsive circumstances. In this back ground, the need of the hour seems to be to evaluate the factors which act as deterrents form many students to go to

such universities. If corrective steps could be taken to attract students by ensuring proper standard at least in the universities at the regional level, the pressure of new admission on the Dhaka University may considerably ease. The students of the concerned regions will then have opportunities for higher studies in their nearby universities

Lately some private universities, colleges have been established in the country. Three such universities are already operating in Dhaka. But this has limited capacity. Moreover the high cost of education at such institution makes little difference to the problem of congestion at the Dhaka University. Of course. there are many people in the country keen on investing big money for giving their children the best possible facilities for education available in the country. But in the view of knowledgeable observers, education is one area that should not be subjected to overcommercialisation. This may be a factor which contributes in a large measure to the creation of inequal standard of education at the same level.



Justice

Mesbahuddin

dead

tice Sved Mesbahuddin Ho-

ssain died of a massive heart

attack vesterday afternoon at

his Sher-e-Bangla Nagar resi-

dence in the city. He was 67,

According to family sources,

Justice Hossain fell ill while he

was saying Asr prayers and

breathed his last within a few

will be taken to Sylhet this

morning where he will be

buried at the graveyard adja-

cent to the mazar of Hazrat

Shahjalal after namaz-e-janaja

his wife, one son, four daugh-

ters, son-in-laws, a host of rel-

atives, friends and well wish-

Condolences

Biswas has expressed deep

shock and profound sorrow at

the sudden death of Mesba-

In a condolence message,

President Biswas said Justice

Hossain was a talented judge.

He conveyed his heartfelt sym-

pathy to the members of the

bereaved family and prayed for

Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia expressed her

deep shock at the death of

Justice Syed Mesbahuddin

In a condolence message,

the Prime Minister recalled

the contribution of Justice

Hossain in discharging his du-

ties with utmost sincerity and

heart-felt sympathy to the

members of the bereaved fam-

ily and prayed for the salvation

Hasina

of the departed soul.

Begum Zia expressed her

Prime Minister Begum

eternal peace of the departed

President Abdur Rahman

Justice Hossain left behind

following Asr prayers.

ers to mourn his death.

uddin Hossain.

Hossain.

dedication.

The body of Justice Hossain

reports BSS

minutes.

Election Commissioner Jus-

US, ROK for solution to DPRK's N-issue thru' talks discuss the North's pro-

SEOUL, Feb 11: South Korea and the United States have agreed to continue efforts for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, news reports today quoted Seoul's Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo_ as saying in Washington, reports Reuter.

"Our two countries decided to exert all available efforts to settle the nuclear question through dialogue until the board of governors' meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) opens (February 21)," Han said on Thursday, according to a report by South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

Han was in Washington to discuss ways to resolve the long-running impasse over North Korea's nuclear programme.

He spoke to South Korean journalists after talks with US Vice President Al Gore and National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, Yonhap's report

Han was scheduled to meet Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Defence Secretary William Perry and other senior US officials today to

Israel-PLO talks resume Monday

JERUSALEM. Feb 11: Talks between Israel and the PLO on Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho will resume in Egypt on Monday, an Israeli spokesman said today, reports Reuter.

Teams headed by PLO chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres at meetings in Cairo bridged gaps on border crossings and security for Jewish settlers that have delayed Israel's pullout from the areas set for December 13.

Oden Ben-Ami, a spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, said negotiators would met in the Egyptian resort of Taba to finalise details of the withdrawal and transfer of civilian authority.

AFP adds: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Thursday said he accepts that the Palestinians have their own "entity,"

but not a state. "I recognize the existence

of a Palestinian entity, but there is a difference between that and a Palestinian state," he said.

"The Palestinians have the right to a flag, symbols and a police force, but not a state," he told a meting of the ruling Labour Party in Tel Aviv.

Rabin was commenting on the signature Wednesday in Cairo of a security deal with the Palestine Liberation Organisation paving the way for Palestinian self-rule in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank region of Jericho.

Rabin voiced hope the accord will allow Israel to "repress terrorism."

gramme which the West fears

Han said that whiles some in the United States took a hardline approach to the nuclear question "The US administration's official policy direction now is to carry on with

Yonhap said.

Korea would not abandon efsanctions

left for Washington on Wednesday a week ahead of schedule, and the United States would decide on its course of action to try to persuade North Korea to open its nuclear sites to

IAEA inspection. Seoul officials expect the

Security Council. North Korea issued a stream of hostile statements last week and said there was

nounce the non-proliferation treaty which the IAEA is pledged to safeguard through

Aid under FWP

From page 1 Col 5 Bangladesh is a serious problem," she said adding 'but we are proud of the success of the

following the famine in 1974.

In reply to a question about the prospects of food autarky in Bangladesh she said Bangladesh is close to attaining self sufficiency in terms of food production, but the autarky depends on proper distribu-

The country needs food assistance for some more years. she said responding to another questioner who asked whether Bangladesh is in a position to suspend the programmes, as some other countries have done.

"The FFW programme ensures sustainable development in the country besides eradicating poverty," she added.

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina has expressed her profound grief at the sudden demise of Syed Mesbahuddin Hossain.

In a message of condolence yesterday, Hasina said, in his death the country lost a patriot. The nation will remember him for his wisdom and farsightedness he showed both as a Judge and Election Commissioner, she added.

CEC

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rauf has expressed deep shock at the sudden death of his colleague, Justice Syed Mesbahuddin Hossain.



US-Japanese trade talks stalled before summit

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: US and Japanese trade negotiations stalled Friday morning before President Clinton and Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa were to meet on economic issues, reports

US and Japanese officials said that US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor and Foreign Minister Tusutomu Hata met from 1:00 am to 4:00

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: President Clinton and Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa opened talks today and Clinton declared the US-Japanese relationship "very strong" in spite of the apparent failure to reach agreement on trade, reports Reuter.

am trying to bridge their differences but adjourned without success.

The talks have broken down," said administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Jiro Okayama, a spokesman for the Japanese delegation, disputed the US characterization that the talks had broken down but he said that at the present time no further sessions between Kantor and Hata were scheduled.

Yeltsin, Clinton talk Bosnian issue

MOSCOW, Feb 11: President Boris Yeltsin spoke with President Clinton for more than 30 minutes Friday about the worsening situation in Bosnia, a Yeltsin spokesman said, reports

The conversation came after several failed attempts earlier this week and came amid rising Russian displeasure over the US and NATO policies toward the former Yugoslavia. .

Russia strongly opposes air strikes on Serb positions near Sarajevo and has criticized NATO for issuing an ultimatum to the Serbs. Russia has long supported the Serbs, who are fellow Slavs.

Yeltsin spokesman Anatoly Krasikov told The Associated Press that Clinton called Yeltsin at 5:15 pm (9:15 am EST). He did not immediately release any details of their conversation.

Earlier this week, Clinton had expressed frustration over his failure to reach the Russian president by telephone to discuss Bosnia.

On Thursday, White House officials blamed 'technical difficulties' and scheduling problems for the failure to complete the call. Clinton indicated the problem was in Moscow. Asked why he could not get through to Yeltsin, he said, "I don't know.

nomic partnership. But on the eve of the summit, the two leaders who came to office promising reform found them selves mired in familiar trade battles of the past Clinton's efforts to secure a Japanese market share for

Friday's meeting at the

White House was intended to

herald a new US-Japan eco-

American autos and auto parts. insurance companies, telecommunications and medical equipment continued to be met with Japanese complaints of "managed trade." At issue are steps to whittle

down the US trade deficit with Japan that is approaching 60 billion dollars. But following a day of closed-door discussions Thursday, Kantor said "very little progress" had been made on opening Japanese markets. He accused Japan of wanting to renegotiate a precursor "framework" agreement reached in July.

"That is obviously unacceptable to the United States." he

Another senior US official said negotiators were "very pessimistic" that Friday's summit would produce a trade

Hearing of Ayodhya case adjourned

LUCKNOW, Feb 11:The Special Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (CBI), Vijay Varma, today adjourned the hearing of the Ayodhya case relating to the demolition of the disputed structure on December 6, 1992, to February 21 next, reports PTI.

Earlier Special Prosecution Counsel Chaube handed over copies of five audio-cassettes to the counsel I B Singh who was appearing on behalf of accused — D B Rai and R N Srivastava.

8 hacked to death in India

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Attackers hacked to death eight mourners while they were returning from a funeral near the southern Indian temple town of Madurai, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, says AFP.

Some 20 attackers ambushed the victims late Thursday night while they were returning from the funeral in Kumuthi, a tiny town near Madurai in Tamil Nadu state, PTI said. Among the victims were five women and a teenage girl.

AG meets PM today

From Page 1 Col 3 Education Minster Jamiruddin

Sircar and Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah were present at the meeting at Sugandha.

Meeting sources said that most of these ministers were in favour of accepting the resignation should Haq submit the

The ministers were learnt to have also suggested to the Prime Minister not to replace Haq with Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khandaker, who has already become controversial.

"A non-controversial man may be chosen for the post of AG," the source said.

The dispensability of Aminul Haq, as well as the timing of his decision to quit, were also considered in detail by the ministers at Sugandha. Aminul Haq, who was appointed by the caretaker government in early 1991, successfully prosecuted deposed president H M Ershad in three corruption cases. He was also expected to appear for the State in several other under trial and pending cases against the former president

The ministers at last night's caucus with the PM, as well as other BNP stalwarts accused Law Minister Mirza Golam

Hafiz of creating the crisis which had embarrassed the government

Late Thursday afternoon Haq reportedly made up his mind to quit and was advised by President Abdur Rahman Biswas to see the Prime Minister before submitting his letter of resignation.

Haq claimed the Law Ministry notification of January 22 asking Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khandaker to function as the Attorney General in the absence of Haq — who had gone out of the country on January 2 and returned January 17 had caused serious problems for him to effectively continue in his post. That notification had said that Wadud Khandaker would act as the AG "until further order."

When contacted by this correspondent Thursday night, Khandaker said he knew nothing about any controversy and that he had little option but to continue acting as the AG until further order, in keeping with the language of the Law Ministry notice.

Despite frantic efforts, Haq could not be reached for comments. His wife told The Daily Star last night that since Thursday Haq has not been at home and was staying with a have been sold out in the mela. relative.

Govt has failed to run country, says Hasina

Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the nation is moving toward a state of ruination because of weak and inefficient administration of the BNP, reports UNB.

"The government has miserably failed to run the country. Corruption, nepotism, unemployment and terrorism have become the salient features of the BNP rule," she

The Awami League presi dent and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament was addressing a group of leaders and workers of Khulna district unit of the Jativa Party at 29 Minto Road in the morning.

More than 500 JP leaders and workers led by former mayor of the Khulna City Corporation Kazi Aminul Haq Amin met Hasina and formally joined the Awami League. Welcoming the new com-

ers, Hasina said their decision in joining the Awami League is very timely in the context of national politics. People are now looking at the Awami League in this critical juncture of the nation, she said.

The present crisis, however, could be overcome by strengthening the Awami League, a trusted organisation of the masses, she observed.

Party's central leaders Zillur Rahman, Salauddin Yusuf MP, Munnujan Sufian, Abul Hasnat Abdullah MP were present.

Prisoner dies in Sylhet jail From Our Correspondent SYLHET, Feb 11: An under-

trial prisoner Babul Miah, 22 died in the Sylhet District Jail this morning. He hailed from a village of Barguna district. The cause of his death could not be ascertained as yet. An UD (unnatural death)

case has been registered with the Kotwali police. Post-mortem examination on the body was performed today in the Sylhet M A G Osmany Medical College Hospital.

Book fair

From Page 1 Col 8 items like food, handicraft, souvenirs and gift items.

In the afternoon, Prof Abu H Imamuddin presented a paper on "Conservation of Traditional and Archaeological sites" as part of the series of academic deliberations, arranged on the occasion.

"The Archaeological sites and structures of the country are given the least support, the key-note speaker said "Consequently, we see an erosion of our tradition."

The paper was later discussed by Dr Nazimuddin Ahmed and Rabiul Hussain with Dr Md Shahjahan in the chair. In the evening, a cultural

show was staged in which Sheikh Lutfar Rahman, Fakir Alamgir, Rathindranath Ray and Shammi Akhter rendered The fire originated at the

southern corner of the Bangla Academy pond at around 8 pm. Flames spread fast during the windy evening and within moments five other adjacent stalls went up in flames. Fire engines rushed to the spot and brought things under

Apurba Publishers' stall at the

control within 10 minutes. The firemen cut off power line, plunging the whole area into darkness. The damaged stalls in

cluded Ridoy Prakashony, Granthoni, Srishty, Uttaradhikar and Bandhu. According to witnesses, the fire was caused by a cigarette butt but the Fire Service did

not confirm it. The extent of damage could not be immediately estimated. Meanwhile, a Bangla Academy handout claimed that books worth Tk 5.33 lakh

were sold at the fair over the past eleven days. The recently published English Bengali Dictionary topped the list as almost all the 5000 copies of the first print

The Midnight File

Snowstorm forces UN to postpone debate on Bosnia

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 11: A flerce snowstorm that hit New York today forced the UN Security Council to postpone debate on the crisis in Bosnia- Herzegovina until Monday. The UN Security Council had called for the session today to allow countries to clarify their positions on the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina but 22 centimetres (nine inches) of snow here made travel treacherous. The Security Council meeting was called for on Tuesday by the Non-Aligned and Muslim countries, reports AFP.

120 nominations received for Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO. Feb 11: Norway's Nobel Institute today said it had received 120 nominations for the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize, roughly in line with previous years. "Sixty-nine individuals and 30 organisations have been nominated in addition to 21 joint nominations," a institute spokeswoman said she declined to give any further details. The list includes names like Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, who have been nominated for their Middle East peace accord, reports Reuter.

Discovery lands in Florida

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla, Feb 11: Space shuttle Discovery and its US -Russian crew returned to Earth today after being forced to stay up an extra orbit because of bad weather at the Florida landing site. The shuttle touched down at Kennedy Space Centre at 2:19 pm. EST (19:19 GMT), ending a history -making mission that began just a few miles away eight days ago, reports AP.

Iraq frees 8 Pak prisoners

BAGHDAD, Feb 11: Presi dent Saddam Husein has freed eight Pakistani prisoners after an appeal by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari, Pakistani diplomats said Thursday, reports

The prisoners, who were jailed for illegal entry, were freedom on Thursday and were to fly back to Pakistan on Friday with Zardari, the diplomats added.

Two of them were military personnel who strayed into Iraq while engaged in minesweeping operations along the Iraq-Kuwait border in March 1993. A third, a construction company employee in Kuwait was arrested in August 1992.

The five others had been arrested after entering the country looking for work, the diplomats said.

Zardari arrived Wedensday on the first visit by a Pakistani official since the 1991 Gulf War, in which Pakistan sided with the US-led multi national coalition that ousted the Iraqi army from Kuwait. Some 10,000 Pakistani soldiers were sent to Saudi Arabia, but they did not fight.

Privatisation Board From Page 1 Col 4

the Council Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. One bid is being reviewed. The asset and liability of the mill in question will need to be restructured before negotiation of sale.

Thus, since the list of 42 enterprises was announced in 1991, actual privatisation has not progressed too far. Sources in the Privatisation Board say that this slow progress has been caused by weak response to offers for sale. The pattern of response has made it clear to the government that most of the enterprises shall have to be restructured before private buyers would be interested in buying them.

The government has drawn up a plan to strengthen the Privatisation Board to enable it to spearhead the privatisation programme more effectively. The plan will raise the Board's technical ability to formulate privatisation programme, lay down criteria for privatisation and draw up time-bound action plan for privatisation of selected enterprises. Sources say that the World Bank is studying privatisation-related issues in Bangladesh and there is a possibility of using a revamped Privatisation Board as the vehicle for future privatisation-related assistance to Bangladesh

Sharp rise

From Page 1 Col 7 prices of soyabean oil and other oil will rise," a wholesaler at the Kawran Bazar predicted yesterday.

Every year, the market prices soar high during the month of Ramadan which is followed by the Eid-ul-Fitr, one of the biggest festivals of the Muslims. The shopkeepers and wholesalers usually try to 'earn extra profit' during this month.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) central committee and the Bangladesh Workers' Party city committee yesterday protested the price hike of essentials in the country during the month of Ramadan.

The BSD brought out a protest procession and held a rally in front of the National Press Club yesterday evening. Addressing the rally, BSD leaders Abdullah Sarkar and Golam Mahbub said, the government had failed to control the price hike of essentials and demanded punitive actions against the black marketeers.

The Workers' Party in a press release expressed its concern at the price hike and held the black marketeers responsible for the price hike

Snowstorm brings Washington to a halt

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: Government offices in the US capital shut down today because of an icy snowstorm that brought Washington and many other parts of the nation to a virtual halt, reports Reuter.

Janice Lachance, an official of the government's office of personnel management, said only essential government services would be operating in the Washington area. About 350,000 civilian workers were affected by the storm.

The icy weather, which included up to six inches of snow in New York, shut many airports and caused widespread absenteeism at offices.

9 killed in Somali

clan war MOGADISHU, Feb 11: Heavy inter-clan fighting erupted in southern Somalia late Thursday and early Friday in which at least nine people died and 15 were wounded, UN military spokesman Chris Budge anno-

unced here, reports AFP. Budge said that fighting between the Ogadeni and Harti Somali clans erupted at the southern port of Kismayo on Friday, killing at least four Somalis and injuring 15

No United Nations Operation Somalia (UNOSOM II) forces were involved in Friday

morning's fighting. JU students

From Page 1 Col 4 tary Rajeguzzaman Ratan slated the 'armed vandalism of the JCD' and the syndicate decision

to close down the university. "Closing down the university could not solve the crisis, "the statement said demanding arrests of all terrorists. The closure of the university will cause sufferings to the students who are already one year behind the academic calendar, the SCF

Seminar on family

From Page 1 Col 4 "The 'haves' associated with the 'have-nots,' in other words wealth and frustration mingled together to commit undesirable things," he observed.

He informed that in Dhaka

city last year 66 incidents of

cruelty to women, 282 abductions, 333 incidents of extortion or terrorism, 239 cases of narcotics traffic ring and 403 cases of car theft took place. He also noted that a good many of their crimes took

place against elderly people or

they became victims of traffic accidents. "We are today engaged in a universal war which threatens to erode our long-cherished values and which has no respect for national boundaries

no discrimination as to race. religion, age, gender, no limit to time," Hug said. Dr Emajuddin Ahmed said that a handful of people have amassed so much wealth that

the expectations of the rest of the society have soared. He said those who expected to retire as associate professor have suddenly found them-

selves in the chair of full protessors. "The majors have become major generals over the last 40 years, those who could give Tk 10 lakh now can give Taka one

crore," he said Dr Rangalal Sen observed that the present crisis in family lives originated from the crisis of capitalism.

ATM Giasuddin said that

isolated from one another and have become escapists. "Nowadays we avoid involvement when we see someone in trouble, or being

mugged ... We never protest

the city-dwellers have become

any injustice." he said. The students no longer fol low their teachers because the teachers lack the ideals, he

concluded

tive, some are of the view that since the university is already steeped in manifold problems of serious nature, its prime objective at present should be to put maximum possible emphasis on maintaining proper standard of education with the

facilities.

There are also others who

is for developing nuclear arms.

dialogue." Asked about the possibility of the United States and North Korea resuming stalled highlevel talks to settle the nuclear issue. Han said there were no immediate plans to do so.

At a security meeting in Seoul on Tuesday, President Kim Young Sam said South forts to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully even if Pyongyang was referred to the United Nations for possible

Seoul officials said Han, who

IAEA to declare Pyongyang in breach of a nuclear safeguards pact unless it agrees to open its sites to inspections by February 21. The IAEA would then refer North Korea to the

"no immediate prospect" of letting the IAEA conduct unconditional inspections of its nuclear sites. It has warned it would regard international sanctions as and act of war and finally re-

regular inspections.

programme in this country." In Bangladesh, the programmes are managed jointly by the WFP, the government and the NGOs. The WFP was taken up in this country

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